

Escrick Parish Council

Minutes of Escrick Annual Parish meeting to be held in The Wenlock Room at The Parsonage Hotel at 7pm on MONDAY 15th May 2023.

- APM2301: **Welcome:** Chair welcomed Councillors and members of public to the meeting.
- APM2302: **Minutes:** It was resolved to accept the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 16th May 2022.
- APM2303: Chair gave a report of Parish Council activities since last APM (full report below).**
- APM2304: **No comments received from Electors' present about the report.**
- APM2305: **Reports from other organisations presented**
a. Village Green Association (see below)
b. Playing Fields Association (see below)
- APM2306: No further comments from electors present at the meeting.

Signed:

Chairman, Escrick Parish Council

Date: May 2024

Escrick Parish Council - Chairman's report 2022-2023

In my first annual report since becoming Chairman, I'd like to start by reflecting on a period of change in the make-up of the Parish Council and the rebuild from a low point in Councillor numbers.

Over the past year we have recovered from the stepping down of many experienced Councillors, at one point Councillor numbers were so low that we lost the 'Power of Competence' capability thus restricting our spending powers. Thankfully, we have recovered to the position we find ourselves in now, where following attempts to promote and recruit in the community, we have a healthy quota of nine Parish Councillors.

Thank you to Councillor Hawes who stepped up to become Vice-Chair and also Councillors Cunningham and Hopkinson who remained in place to continue adding their experience to the PC. During the year we saw Councillor Rees step down after making an excellent contribution to the PC during his term, in particular most recently leading the push to get the Escrick Neighbourhood Development Plan over the finishing line. I thank Councillor Tipples for his brief time with us and I'm very pleased that new Councillors Marion & Stewart Allen, Mark Fairbairn, Dan King and Ifet Karbani joined our team in the past year.

I'd like to thank our Clerk/RFO Sally Look for her dedication, professionalism and support during the past year - her efforts are very much appreciated.

There now follows a summary of the key activities the PC has been involved in during 2022-23 :-

Selby District Council (SDC) Local Plan and proposed Heronby development

We were somewhat outflanked leading up to late July 2022 when, after being previously assured by local SDC Councillors that Burn was highly likely to be selected as the key new development site from the shortlist, we were

surprised to be informed that Heronby was in fact about to be nominated. The PC quickly determined that we had the unanimous support of Councillors to oppose this development, but we needed an independent group to carry this position forward rather than dealing with this issue directly as a PC. An extraordinary meeting was called on 18th August to explain our position, 60 members of the public attended, 40 of them signed up to help after the meeting and a core technical team was then formed, choosing the group name 'Halt Heronby Action Group' (HHAG). My thanks go to all involved, in particular, Phil Wade and John Page who, along with the members of the technical team, have done an excellent job in carrying forward the majority wishes of all the surrounding communities, putting forward excellent fact based arguments that all area residents could use in their personal responses to SDC. The Parish Councils representing villages adjacent to the proposed site were asked to make financial contributions and they stepped forward to provide funding to HHAG, along with our own PC, to oppose the proposed Heronby development. The Chairs of Escrick, Stillingfleet and Cawood submitted joint letters to our MP and City of York Council (CYC) and the support received from CYC, along with their fact based arguments against the development, were really helpful in supporting our cause.

We look forward to continuing our opposition via HHAG now SDC has handed over the decision making process to North Yorkshire Council (NYC). I think Councillors can be proud of the way the PC responded to this threat to our quality of life, my thanks in particular to Councillor Hawes and Councillor Stewart Allen for assisting me in compiling the PC response document that was submitted to SDC during the consultation process.

Escrick Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

On the 6th October 2022 the NDP received an 89.7% vote in favour of SDC using our NDP document to help decide on future planning applications in our parish. My congratulations and thanks go to the former Councillor Tudor Rees and his team of Councillor Hawes, former Councillor Coulson and Eric Hardy for delivering a professional NDP and Design Code for future planning application guidance.

Village Shop

It has been a long haul, but thanks to the dedication of Councillor Hawes and Eric Hardy we hope the Village Shop will eventually open its doors for trade later this year. Escrick Club Committee successfully applied for a National Lottery Grant which along with funding from District and County Councillors budgets, plus potential local donations, has enabled this idea to progress - so well done to all concerned.

Volunteer 'Tidy Team'

In January Councillors Hawes, King & Stewart Allen along with myself volunteered to clear the Church path of a thick carpet of decaying leaves from the Surgery access road to the Bus Stop. The same group have offered to form a team with parents connected with the School to periodically clear the path from Main Street to the Playing Field. This path, our Clerk only recently discovered after making enquiries, is now owned by the School Academy rather than North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) as it was previously. I'm very happy that this type of self-help group is flourishing in our community – hopefully this concept will develop further should members of the community offer their support.

Increased energy costs and PC precept

The precept we applied for had to increase by a little over 10% this year to go some way to helping us fund the large increase in street lighting energy costs. The annual bill from NYCC has increased from £692.17 + VAT in 2021-22 to £1465.42 + admin + VAT in 2022-23 - with costs set to increase even further. There is also a concern about future tree maintenance costs in the village Conservation area, which continue to rise. It is unfortunate that the precept had to increase by such a large percentage, but given the present circumstances outlined, this situation is unavoidable.

Planning applications

The 'Planning Working Group' have had a quieter year, for a number of reasons, but with the change in group membership we attempt to be positive in striking a balance between all concerned parties. We continue to study

each application and respond to NYC based on application merit, with NDP document guidelines to help all concerned. Three key issues to mention from this year are as follows :-

1. Black Bull redevelopment – We continue to oppose this plan, it goes against many aspects of our NDP, however unfortunately NYC have decided to approved it.
2. Former Slaughterhouse site – We are generally in favour of this development which we hope will improve the local environment for residents, we await a decision from NYC.
3. In November we made a Corporate Complaint to SDC about three Planning Department issues where we were not getting any response from them :-

3a. The retrospective planning application for a garden gas tank at Grove House – this has eventually been turned down, but still not enforced by SDC as far as we can tell.

3b. Hellings House, 73 Main Street, including reduction of back garden fir tree – still no decision after more than 1 year, which hardly encourages residents to follow local council tree management guidelines in future.

3c. SDC Conservation area review – poor and inaccurate content by the producers of this document. Escrick Parish Council offered corrections but these have not been implemented to date and this document has been parked for now, however our objections remain should NYC choose to continue.

Hopefully we can look again in 2023 at obtaining a resolution to 3a and 3b now the former SDC Planning Department is part of NYC.

Maintenance and general issues

My thanks go to former Chairman Richard Rowson who continues to assist with issues such as cleaning of the complete fountain and war memorial plaque, defibrillator maintenance, Skipwith Road VAS sign, 'No vehicle' sign replacement on Carrs Meadow, village website etc.

After much chasing by our Clerk the white lining along Carr Lane was eventually renewed. The project to install dropped curbs at various junctions around the village was also completed this year.

Over the past year the two village noticeboards have been re-stained and renewed. At the Playing field - wood filling and repainting of the toddler 'Lappset Duck', concrete filling of large rabbit holes under the table tennis table and anti-pigeon spikes fitted above the swings has taken place.

There has been re-stocking of the two village sign flower beds plus ongoing management, repainting the posts surrounding the fountain and periodic cleaning and sweeping of the bus shelters / war memorials continues.

A new streetlight has been installed adjacent to the southbound A19 bus shelter, there have been no reported issues with inadequate lighting in the area at night, as was originally feared by some.

Backburner items

- Village gateway – after our Clerk chased highways for over a year, this road modification has been put on hold until a response is received;
- Pop up Post Office – former Councillor Rees chased BT for nearly a year requesting telecoms installation without success, this has now been parked until they respond. As installation would be in the Village Hall, Councillor Cunningham has kindly agreed to periodically enquire about this as part of her Village Hall role, hence it is no longer a PC project;
- Street lighting energy use evaluation - we have considered the options of both upgrading the older lights that were not already LED and also switching LED lights already fitted to 'part night' setting so they were switched off between midnight and 5am. Neither option, it was determined, made financial sense at this point in time, but set up will be upgraded as any older lights fail in the future.

PC Meetings venue

We have moved our meeting venue for a number of reasons from Escrick Club, with privacy being a key driver as well as cost. We now meet at the Wenlock Room (adjacent to reception) at the Parsonage Hotel, as is always the case members of the public are welcome to attend.

Terry Chambers

Chairman, Escrick Parish Council

Village Green Association report:

- The VGA are appealing for helpers for events to assist with the putting up and taking down of tents. We are a small aging group and finding the task physically hard work with so few members. We are placing an advert in the Parish Mag and Facebook to try to obtain a committed list of helpers for our future events. The 15th July summer event is in doubt if we are unable to find additional help. However, we are committed to run the 10k Run on the 19th August, but will need lots of assistance from residents.
- A larger storage facility near to the green would be beneficial for the storage of chairs and tables near to hand, which would reduce the effort of transporting these from various storage points outside the village. This will be discussed at our future meeting.

Plans going forward for 2023

- The VGA are in contact with Highways and the Ouse & Derwent IDB about plans to place a conduit under Carr Lane to connect a water pump from the beck to supply water to the pond on the Green. This will probably be done at the back end of the year or early spring 2024. This is to enable us to keep water levels up regularly without the need for a surface crossing over Carr Lane.
- A small PVC Dingy is being purchased to enable the removal of blanket weed from the pond. This will be left at the edge of the water on the bank, once removed, to allow water mammals and insects to escape back to the water.
- 4 picnic benches have been donated to the VGA and are now in place on the village green.

Playing Fields Association report:

No significant issues having arisen.

The biggest challenge currently seems to be both moles and rabbits; it's proving very difficult to get someone to actually come and deal with them.

The other challenge is the usual one of 'recruitment'. Thanks to the PC for assisting with this; the next step is to advertise through the school, so hoping to get some response from the approach. The park seems to be being used frequently and regularly which is very positive.

Wheldrake Junior Football continue to use the playing fields for matches which is another positive use of the area.